

836 quite free and the married woman is taboo. Amongst the Pedis
837 it is just the reverse ; girls are absolutely prohibited from having
any sexual relation before their marriage and, on the contrary,
after marriage a woman who has had children can have inter-
course with other men than her husband. I shall try to
explain this difference when dealing with Pedi customs. (Part II.
Chap. I. G.)

000 In his book on Kafir Socialism, Dudley Kidd has laid great
stress on the fact that the mental development of the African
Native is arrested at the time of puberty, and has tried to
find remedies for this inferiority. It may be said that the
vivacity of mind, the rapidity of comprehension, which is some-
times wonderful amongst the younger boys, decreases when they
reach the age of fifteen or sixteen. Cases can even be recorded
amongst them of an arrest or slackening in the development of the
psychical faculties at the period of puberty. But this is by no
means the rule. In all our Institutions we have pupils who show
great zeal for study and increased intellectual power between
sixteen and twenty. I may say that Dr Mac Vicar of Lovedale
concluded as I do, that this assertion of D. Kidd is very much
exaggerated.

D. MARRIAGE

512 According to the old Thonga idea it was only when a boy was
178 fully grown that he could think of marriage. In former times
lads used to enjoy their youth in carelessness and pleasure,
going to dance in all the villages, till they were twenty five years old.
Nowadays boys marry very early. Money to lobola is obtained
more readily and "gangisa" is not as easy as it used to be, two
reasons which have advanced the marriage age in the present
generation.

604 that I intend to treat it more fully later on in a special paragraph, when considering the traces of older forms of family life amongst the Thongas.

601 The true malume is the mother's full brother. But all her half brothers are also bamalume in the second degree; so are also the brothers of the true malume.

605 What about the children of the malume, my cousins, or rather my

835 cross-cousins, sons and daughters of my mother's brothers, viz.

582 Shaputa and Marangen as opposed to Madonge and Misaben? In Zulu, Sutho, Pedi there is a special term to indicate this relation, (mzala, motsoala, mudzwala, muzwala). And the main feature of the family system in those tribes is that a cousin has a prior right to marry the daughter of his maternal uncle, his mzala. Amongst the Thongas there is nothing of the kind. The special term does not exist except in the Maputju clan, at the Southern extremity of Thonga territory, where it is met with in the form of *ntale* (corresponding to mzala, according to the law of phonetic permutation) (1) or *shitale* (when preceded by the prefix shi).

605 But the right of marrying this cousin is not recognized in the Thonga tribe. One can play with her, steal some object from

835 her in fun, but never take her as a wife. Such a breach of the custom would be punished by the chief. Later on, when the

582 special relation of cross-cousins has been more or less forgotten, marriage could take place between them, but, at any rate, the ceremony of *daya shilongo* (see p. 256) would be performed, in order to "kill" the previous relationship and to replace it by the new relation of husband and wife.

602 This being so, how do cross-cousins behave towards each other in the Thonga system? As regards the daughter of their maternal uncle, the relationship is somewhat different for Misaben, a boy, and for Madonge, a girl. To Misaben the boy, Shaputa, his cousin, is *mamana* and she will call him son, *ñwana*, because, as we have seen, Shaputa is a potential wife for Mboza, father of Misaben, and Mboza calls her *nkata*, *nsati*, *namu*. To Madonge,

605 (1) They also employ the cognate form *muzali*, which is more akin to the Zulu regular term, and this tends to show that the Maputjus have borrowed this expression from their Zulu neighbours of Northern Amatsongoland.

607 of the lobolo are still in the hands of the father-in-law. But later on these oxen are used to provide a wife for one of the sons, and the woman thus obtained is the great mukoñwana; therefore her hut belongs in a certain sense to the man with whose oxen she was bought. When he arrives, he may first be "shown" (komba) the mother-in-law's hut and rest there for a while, but at once the hut of the great mukoñwana will be prepared and he will move into it for the night; of course the mistress of the house has gone elsewhere, and it is the tinamu who will sleep in her hut to keep him company. (However should the visitor have not yet paid the lobolo, he will not be received in this hut. It may happen that his bakoñwana will say to him: "Where is your hut? Sleep outside!")

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582 Why do the relations of a man with the wife of his brother-in-law resemble so greatly his relations with his wife's mother? Let us remember that this man is the potential husband of the daughter of the first, just as he is the actual husband of the daughter of the second. It is probable that the great principle that "a man must not marry a woman and her mother" dictates this extraordinary fear and avoidance in both cases. But, in the case of the wife of the brother-in-law, there is still another element: "The oxen!" This woman has been acquired by the oxen paid by the man to obtain his wife, and this explains the uneasiness which characterises their relation.

This second reason is perhaps more readily recognised by the Thongas than the first; they sometimes tell you that it is the only reason. But I think they are wrong, and that the same deep feeling that to marry a woman and her mother is incestuous is certainly at the base of these taboos. I may mention two facts in proof of this:

a) Once when I asked a woman of the Maputju country if her husband would be allowed to marry the wife of his brother-in-law, she seemed extremely shocked by the idea and exclaimed: "What are you thinking of? Marry his mother!" To her it would be incest, as much so as if the man had sexual relations with his own mother.

b) The wife of the brother-in-law is not the only great mukoñwana. The wives of his brothers, and of his sons and grandsons are all classed under that term. Why is this? Because a man has a prior right to marry not only the daughter of this special woman but all the daughters of his bakoñwana, and all these women, who are their mothers, are conse-

607 quently his potential mothers. He avoids them all, not on account
835 of the lobolo oxen, which he did not actually pay for their daughters,
312 but because it is intolerable to think that he might have relations with a
 woman and her mother.

607 But no doubt the fact that oxen have been paid by the man,
586 oxen by means of which his great mukoñwana was bought, is
835 the principal cause of the fear which they both feel towards each
 other. These oxen have created a sort of interdependence
 between them: Mboza says: "Should my home be disturbed by
 quarrels, should my wife Nsabula leave me and run away to her
 parents, or should she die without children, I shall go and claim
 my oxen... But the oxen have been employed to buy a wife for
 my brother-in-law, (Maphunga for Mahangale). If Gogwe has no
 other means at his disposal he must separate the pair Maphunga-
 Mahangale, cancel their marriage, send Maphunga home and
 claim the money from her parents. Or I might myself take
 Maphunga as my wife, and in either of these cases the marriage
 Maphunga-Mahangale would be annulled."

Thus it may happen that Mboza may marry his great
 mukoñwana, though such a union is really incestuous, according
 to the deep moral feeling of the tribe. This is truly terrible!

587 But does this ever really happen? I have put this question to
607 many Thongas, in the various clans of the tribe, and remarked
 that there are differences amongst them.

Amongst the Nkunas of Shiluvane it is an absolute impossibility.
 Another woman is offered to meet the claim of the son-in-law who
 has lost his wife. This is called: "Ku hingakanya ntjandja", i. e.
 "to put a log across the road." The woman offered may be a
 little girl, still at the breast of her mother, or even a little boy. This
 is your wife, his parents will say to the son-in-law, and he must be
 content to know that, as this male baby will no doubt have a sister
 in the course of the two following years, the girl to be born will
 replace his wife. "Ntjandja a ba tluli" i. e. "One does not jump
 over the log." The man will not persist in his claim, and will not
 insist on taking the great mukonwana to replace his wife.

Amongst the Khosas and Biles, such a marriage can take place

607 so far as to sleep in the hut of my great mukonwana together with
 835 me (p. 242). Nevertheless sexual relations are not allowed.
 585 Should a man commit this sin, and should his sister-in-law
 582 become pregnant, he will have to pay a fine, or rather he will go to
 his father-in-law and say: (Viguet) "Ndi dlele ku dya" - "I have
 killed in order to eat" which means: I have committed a bad
 action but with the intention of repairing my wrong by marrying
 the girl. He brings five hoes when he makes the announcement and
 will remit the remainder of the lobolo later on. A younger sister
 when married to the same husband as the elder, is called *nhlampsa*
 of the latter. This term comes probably from *hlampsa*, to wash,
 because she washes the dishes of her sister and works more or
 less as her servant.

607 The right of marrying one's wife's sisters is by no means an
 582 obligation. I am not in any way forced to do so, if I do not like
 585 them. Most probably, even if I wished to marry them all, I should
 not have enough oxen to "lobola" them all. On the other hand, the
bakonwana are not obliged to give them to me. If I am not
 a good husband to my wife, if she complains that I illtreat her, her
 parents will not consent to receive my oxen for her sisters. Should
 my *tinamu* marry other men, of course the peculiar *bulamu*
 relations will cease. I can no longer allow myself the intimacy
 I previously had with them. But if they have children by these
 men, they will call me *tatana* and I shall call them *bana*, because I
 might have been their father, having a prior right of marrying
 their mothers.

607 My wife's elder sisters are not *tinamu* to me; they are
 582 *bakonwana*. Why so? Because when I married my wife, her
 elder sisters were already married, according to the law that
 an elder sister must always marry before the younger. A father
 would never consent to give away the younger before the elder.
 Therefore I have never had the opportunity of playing with my
 wife's elder sisters and considering them as possible wives.

607 By extension the term *namu* is also applied to my wife's
 585 younger brothers. They are *bakonwana*, in fact (p. 238).
 Their daughters are my potential wives. However, the relations
 I have with them are easier than with the elder brothers and

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607 of the first category. Sexual intercourse with them is a great taboo, and a man daring to commit such a sin would be likened to a wizard: he has killed his brother. This is the sin called *matlulana* (App. VI). My younger brother's wives are not *tinamu*; we call each other *ñwingi*. I do not inherit them except in extraordinary cases when the deceased has no brother younger than himself.

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582 There is still a *third kind of bulamu*. I also call *tinamu* the cousins of my wife who are the daughters of my wife's mother's sisters. These girls do not belong to my wife's clan; they bear the family name of their father. Therefore I have no right to inherit them: "A hi delani ndjaka," i. e. "we do not inherit from each other." The relations with these *tinamu* are agreeable, but there is no hope of marriage between us.

2) RELATIONS ON THE HUSBAND'S SIDE.

607 So far we have considered the relation of Mboza with his wife's family. But what about Nsabula and her position towards her husband's relatives? Nsabula calls Masuluke and Nsengamuñwe *ñwingi*, and the term is reciprocal. It implies great respect. As we saw, the young bride must work a whole year for her mother-in-law. The same respect is shown by Nsabula to Djan, Sam, Fos, her husband's elder brothers. They are also *ñwingi* to each other. "Should I send her to call Djan," says Mboza, "she will kneel down before him and say: 'My father! Mboza calls you!' or: 'Nwamasuluke (Masuluke's son), you are wanted with us.'" She will not dare to address him by name. This extraordinary respect is reciprocal. Djan will consider Nsabula as his inferior, but he will never play with her. On the other hand, Komatane, Mboza's younger brother, is only a *namu* to Nsabula. Both will joke together and even occasionally smear each other with ashes. So will Sam, Fos, Mboza and Komatane with Mhlaakaza, the wife of their elder brother. Thus we note
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595 this law: a woman will generally respect the elder brothers of her husband (*berigi*), and hold very free intercourse with his younger brothers (*tinamu*), and vice-versa. A man will keep away from

607 his younger brother's wives (*bengi*) and play with those of his elder
835 brothers (*tinamu*). Why tis here this difference? Because, as
395 we saw, the wife of an elder brother is a possible wife for all
582 his younger brothers, as they have the right of inheriting
 her, should this man die. On the contrary, an elder brother
 inherits his younger brother's wife only under quite exceptional
 circumstances. One does not marry a *nwingi*! This would be an
 insult to one's wife. *Nsabula* would leave *Mboza* if *Mboza* were
 to marry *Magugu*, *Komatane's* wife, because they have been
 accustomed to call each other *nwingi*.

607 To a wife, her husband's elder sister is also a *nwingi* (*Ndjibari*
 to *Nsabula*). The husband's younger sister is a *namu* or *nhombe*,
 and two *tinhombe* have very free relations, just as in the case of
 the *tinamu*. This freedom exists between female *tinamu* as well
 as between *tinamu* of different sexes.

606 There is a final term to be mentioned: *bakhoti* or *bakhoti-*
kulobye, in *Ronga*, *basevele* in *Djonga*, a reciprocal term by which
 the parents of a husband and wife call each other.

593 How far is a woman incorporated in her husband's family?
 769 She belongs to it till her death, provided the lobolo oxen have been
 paid, but she does not accept the ancestor-gods of her parents-in-
 law as being her gods. She keeps her own gods, and prayers are
 frequently addressed to them by her father or by her brothers in
 favour of her children. In this respect *Thongas* differ widely
 from the old *Aryan* peoples, where a woman had to adopt the
 religion of her husband's clan when she married.

606 Before leaving the subject of relations with parents-in-law, and
 in order to show to what extent the uneasiness and fear which
 characterises them are carried, I will briefly mention the taboos
 of the *bukoñwana*, which play such a great part in *Bantu* family
 life. Let me say that most of these taboos (*psiyilayilana*, small
 prohibitions), are not so severe as those connected with sexual
 relations, disease and death. It is not believed that a breach of

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581 eventual misunderstanding between them will have its "contre coup" throughout the two groups. The two families regard each other with mistrust, especially the two married couples who depend so closely upon each other, owing to the lobola; but when they have become acquainted, when they are assured that common life is possible and even agreeable, when the first alliance has been strengthened by others amongst the tinamu, then the bukoniwana taboos more or less fall off. This is an explanation of these strange relations between relatives-in-law; I do not pretend that it is absolutely adequate. There may also be in this domain some remains of previous customs which have now disappeared, and Comparative Ethnography will probably throw more light on this problem in the course of time.

C. MARRIAGE RULES

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The study of the terms of relationship has shown us the constitution of the Thonga family. We have seen that they are often dictated by the possibility or non-possibility for a man of marrying certain women. There exist distinct marriage rules, and I propose to recapitulate them here, at the risk of some repetition, in order to throw as much light as possible on this difficult but very important subject.

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178 Generally speaking it may be said that the Thongas are *endogamic* as regards the tribe and the clan, and *exogamic* as regards the family. They are *endogamic* as regards the tribe, that is to say they marry within it. Members of clans very remote from each other may find it difficult to contract unions, (see later on), but they do so, especially in Spelonken, where representatives of many different parts of the tribe have met by force of historical circumstances. In the neighbourhood of Lourenço Marques you may find Thonga women married to men of other tribes and even to white people. But this is the result of a new state of things, which the old Thongas did not foresee; nor would they have approved of it, I am sure. In Shiluvane, I was in a very favourable

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582 In Shiluvane, I was in a very favorable
 177 position to judge of the real feelings of the Thongas. There
 609 were two tribes there, which had been living side by side for
 648 more than seventy years, tribes united by old friendship and
 military alliance, viz., the Nkuna clan of the Thongas and the
 Khaha clan of the Pedis. I did not see a single case of inter-
 marriage between them. The difference of language could not
 account for the fact, because generally speaking, all the men could
 speak both Thonga and Pedi. When asked why they did not
 contract unions with the Pedis, the Nkunas answered: "Their
 customs are too disgusting for us." They meant more especially
 the freedom with which Khaha women commit adultery. Pedis
 would probably have made the same objection to the immorality
 of Thonga boys and girls. Whatever may be the cause, they
 have not intermarried up to this day.

582 On the other hand the Thongas are exogamic as regards the
 family. To understand properly these exogamic rules, let us
 classify the cases in the four following categories: Cases of
 absolute prohibition of marriage; of conditional permission;
 of unconditional permission, and cases in which marriage is
 recommended.

1. Cases of absolute prohibition.

582 As a rule marriage is prohibited between a tatana, mamana,
 605 rarana and a nwana, and between bamakwabu.

On the father's side the prohibition is particularly severe.
 Amongst the Ba-Ronga, it is taboo for a boy to marry a girl
 when both can lay claim to a common ancestor in the paternal
 line. It seems that the rule is not so stringent in the Northern
 clans. According to Mankhelu, marriage is absolutely prohibited
 between all the descendants of a grandfather, viz., between first
 cousins. Between second cousins it is permitted conditionally,
 "by killing the family tie," and between third cousins it is allowed.
 "Third cousins" as Mankhelu says, "are batlandlamani ba tolo;
 they belong to families which were relatives yesterday. We are

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605 no longer taboo for them, we can go and take a wife amongst them."

On the mother's side, this absolute prohibition extends to first cousins when the mothers are sisters. They are true bama-kwabu; they have been nursed at the same breast. But more remote cousins marry more easily when their relationship is on the mother's side. The bakokwana do not marry their batukulu, owing to their duty of sacrificing for them, but the batukulu have a kind of preferential right to women related to their mother: "Where father has married, I may also go to find my wife," said Gana. However the rule remains that bamakwabu must not intermarry.

When asked: "Why?" the Thongas generally say: "Because it is so. Psa yila. It is our law." It is however possible to find some more satisfactory reasons; for these prohibitions are dictated to a certain extent by fear of consanguinity. Natives have probably noticed that the offspring of such unions are sometimes weak in intellect or altogether wanting. Therefore, in this polygamic family system, they make a careful distinction between relatives who are of the same mother and of the same father, and those whose mothers are different. When a cousin is by another grandmother, though I call her makwabu just as I do my true sister or first cousin, I may contemplate marrying her. She is my half first cousin only. However the fear of consanguinity is not the only nor perhaps the strongest reason for these exogamic rules. If it were so, why should relatives on the father's side be more taboo than those on the mother's side? Moreover it is strange to see that in the royal families the same prohibitions are not maintained. Nwamanti-byana, chief of Mpumo, married Mimalengane, his rarana, his first cousin once removed on the father's side. If the physical dangers alone arising from consanguinous unions were thought of, such marriages ought to be doubly feared in the royal family!

It seems to me that there are two other reasons:

582 In the Thonga mind there is a natural repulsion to confounding and intermingling bushaka and bukoñwana, relationship by blood and by marriage. Bushaka is a kind of relation which they do not deem compatible with bukoñwana, as we shall presently see.

582 To the Northern clans this is not so repugnant : with them, it is a current saying that bukoñwana revives bushaka when bushaka has become weaker in the course of generations (1).

A third reason for these strong taboos, a reason which explains also why the prohibition is stronger on the father's side than on the mother's, is found in the *lobola* custom. Should a woman who is a relative on my father's side become my wife and should our union be put an end to by quarrels, I should go to her father to claim the lobola. If her father happens to possess no oxen to return to me, he will have to go to his relatives to get them... He may have to come to my own father, who is his brother and belongs to the same family, a consequence which would be indeed absurd, because then I should myself pay the debt due to me!

On his wife's side, a man cannot marry the elder sister of his wife, who is mukoñwana to him, nor the daughters of his wife's sisters, who are *bana* to him, as we have seen.

II. Marriages conditionally permitted.

582 In some cases a marriage which ought not to take place may
602 be allowed on condition that the whole family will perform
588 the rite called *dlaya shilongo*. This is a most curious custom, and is found all through the tribe. I know of two cases in which it has been resorted to: a certain Mkili, of the Makaneta sub-clan (Nondwane) wished to marry Minsabula, his makwabu. Both had a common ancestor Muwayi. Muwayi had by a first wife a son called Basana, and by a second wife another son called Nsabula. Basana was the father of Mungobo, father of Mkili, and Nsabula

(1) It is also very much against the feeling of the tribe to confound bukoñwana and bulamo. A man named Filemon had married the daughter of a woman of dissolute habits, and the woman had given herself to a man who was the brother of Filemon's maternal grandmother. This man was therefore a malume for Filemon, and his wives were balamo, even basati, possible wives for him, as he had the right to inherit them (p. 233). For this reason he said: "My wife's mother cannot marry that man, not only because of the Christian law which we have accepted, but also because of our own old customs. Why? Because she is my mother-in-law, my mukoñwana, and by her marriage she would become my namu and I might inherit her. That is impossible."

582 was the father of Minsabula. Mungobo and Nsabula were first
 602 cousins or half first cousins (as their grandmothers, wives of
 588 Muwayi, were different). Therefore Mkili was the first cousin
 once removed of Minsabula. Both were ba ka Makaneta. Another
 case was that of Michel, son of Gana and Nwashiluvane, who
 married Djamel, daughter of Mankhelu, who was Nwashiluvane's
 brother. Mankhelu was the malume of Michel and Djamel was
 his mamana, being the possible wife of Gana (See page 233). For
 a Thonga to marry her malume's daughter, *psa yila*, (See p. 234)
 whilst for a Pedi it is the proper thing. This is one of the great
 differences between the law of the two tribes. A Pedi has a real
 right of pre-emption on his *mudzwala*, whilst amongst the Thongas
 it is the father who possesses that right. (See later on G.) Pos-
 sibly this Pedi custom encouraged Michel to entertain an idea which
 is repulsive to the Thonga mind. But the official *dlaya shilongo*
 took place in his case also.

I tried to discover in what other cases such a prohibited marriage
 was rendered possible by the performance of the rite, and found
 the following.

Conditional marriage is permissible with the daughter of my
 great-uncle, the younger brother of my grandfather; and with the
 daughter of my grandfather by a wife other than my grandmother.
 Both are rarana. According to Mankhelu, it might also take place
 between himself and Shiluvane. This Shiluvane (who is not
 the chief Shiluvane, of course; but an entirely different person), is
 the daughter of the maternal great-uncle of Mankhelu, brother of
 Shidyale, who is his true grandfather, the father of his mother.
 Shiluvane is therefore the first cousin once removed of Mankhelu
 on his mother's side. She is a mamana.

But what is this rite of *dlaya shilongo* which has such power that
 it removes the taboo character of such marriages? *Shilongo*
 or *mulongo* is an archaic word retained only in this expression and
 which corresponds to bushaka, blood relationship. This root
 exists also with that meaning in the Sutho word *seloko*. The rela-
 tion by blood must be killed in order that the relation by marriage
 may be substituted for it.

Let us first see how this is done in the Northern clans.

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called *the cat*, because it is like a cat which is put on their shoulders and scratches them. It scratches away the *bukoñwana* which prevented their marriage. (Viguet.) In this case it is the *shikoñwana* which is killed. So the taboo is removed and they can marry.

III. Marriages permitted.

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Relatives from the eighth degree of relationship can marry unconditionally (Mankhelu). The choice of a boy is unlimited within the clan and even within the tribe. However, marriages into a *too far distant clan* are not recommended, according to Viguet, for the following reasons: 1) If the marriage were unsuccessful, the parents-in-law against whom the claim would be brought might run away with wife and oxen, and we should lose our herd. 2) If our oxen multiplied in the other clan, we might be tempted to go and make war on our parents-in-law in order to appropriate the cattle. So blood would be shed on account of our own oxen! This would bring shame upon us! Whilst if we marry amongst friends, even amongst remote relatives, should a quarrel occur, we shall try to settle it peacefully. These people are amongst those with whom we discuss in the hut. With strangers we discuss outside, on the square, and we occasionally fight with them and drive them away. So a difficulty can better be dealt with when our *bukoñwana* are people living close by.

IV. Marriages recommended.

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Here we must take into account two different cases: some marriages are contracted on account of a kind of right of pre-emption, others on account of a right of inheritance.

1) RIGHT OF PRE-EMPTION.

There are amongst the relatives of a man certain women on whom he has a kind of preferential claim, or a right of pre-emption.

582 and whom he calls spouses, because he would be welcomed if he
607 were able to lobola them. They are his *tinamu* or *tinhlampsa*, viz., his wife's younger sisters or the daughters of his wife's brother. These marriages are considered as peculiarly appropriate. This does not however constitute an absolute right for the man. Should he not prove a good husband, his parents-in-law will not let him have their other daughters (p. 240).

582 As regards marriage with the wife's brother's daughter, who is the
607 *nhlampsa* proper, there are different possibilities to be considered.
595 It may very well happen that a man's wife, wishing to have a young girl to help her in her domestic work, approaches her brother and asks him to lend her his daughter, the woman's niece, to stay in her village for this purpose. He consents, and she grows up there. Later on however the girl's parents say to their sister: If your husband has oxen, he may take her as a wife. She returns home and discusses the matter with her husband. Should the latter be agreed, he will send his wife with £ 1.10.—to make a proposal to the girl's parents, and he will take the girl at once without much ceremony. The remainder of the lobolo will perhaps be paid afterwards. If a son wants to marry and has no means of buying his wife, then the girl's parents will say to their sister: "Please remind your husband that he has not yet given the oxen." But they will not urge this too strongly as it is their sister who arranged the marriage in order to secure help for herself. On the contrary should the husband have taken the initiative, and sent his wife to ask her parents to give him the girl because he wanted her, then the lobolo oxen will be claimed at once, or at any rate the *bakoñwana* will be in a position to insist on a speedy remittance of the bride-price. But as my informant says: "*Psi'ya hi bhanu*," i. e. "it goes according to the people." It depends on their character.

586 However there is a reason which militates against such
582 marriages. If I quarrel with my first wife, who may have a
607 particularly difficult character, and she goes home, her younger
595 sisters or nieces, who are her *tinhlampsa*, will certainly follow her, and I shall remain quite alone without a single dish to eat in the evening. Should the quarrel end in a divorce, I shall lose all my

586 wives at once. The custom of marrying a wife's tinhlampsa is
 582 approved of; it is however not very frequently observed in Thonga
 607 families at the present time.

595 Other women to whom a man has a special right are his relatives
 on the mother's side, as we have seen; to take a wife from the family
 in which the father found the mother is recommended and approved
 of as long as she is not too near a relative.

2) THE RIGHT OF INHERITANCE.

587 The second class of cases does not concern unmarried women
 835 whom I mean to lobola, but widows whom I may inherit after
 768 the death of their husband. Those whom I may eventually inherit
 595 are generally called by me *namu* or *nsati*, and I have very free
 582 relations with them, but as already pointed out this liberty never
 goes so far as to allow of sexual intercourse (p. 247). "Ndi nga
 da," viz. "I can eat, inherit by prior right" my elder brother's
 widow: she is my regular legacy. As regards my younger brother's
 widow, I can only marry her if she is old and no longer able to bear
 children. But if she is still a childbearing woman, to take her is
 very much against the feelings of the tribe. The reason of the
 prohibition is this, says Viguet: suppose that this widow of my
 younger brother already has children. I take her, and have a child
 by her. The child takes precedence of the first children of its
 mother: he is their *hosi*, because I, myself, the father, am the
 elder brother of the deceased. On the other hand, he is *ndjisana*
 of his other brothers, because he was born after them by
 the same mother. This is impossible; it runs counter to the
 most elementary notions of the family. In exceptional cases,
 however, when no one else can claim my younger brother's
 widow, I may take her.

587 Next to my true tinamu comes the widow of my maternal uncle.
 768 If he had many, one might be allotted to me in the distribution.
 595 But of course, in this as in all other cases of inherited women, the
 582 children born of our union would belong to the family who paid
 the lobolo, and not to me. I have, in a sense, only the usufruct
 of the property. She will till the fields for me and serve me with

587 my daily plate of porridge, but she is not really mine. She is given
768 (nyika) to me by favour, and only under specified conditions.
595 I can also inherit *bakokwana*, the widow of my malume's father
582 (not my true grandmother, of course, but her co-wife), the widow
 of my father's brothers.

Muhambi can inherit Magugu, *the widow of his cousin Hlangabeza*. This cousin is a brother (makwabu) and the two fathers are brothers. But he could not inherit Debeza, wife of Phusa. Why so? Because Phusa, being a cousin by the father's sister, belongs to another *shibongo*, the *shibongo* of his own father Muki and not to that of his mother. Should Muhambi lay claim to Debeza, the men of Mashabane (the name of Phusa's clan) would say: "We are opposed to it, because your doing so would in fact mean that you eat two herds. You have eaten one herd when we bought Ndjibari from your people. Ndjibari has had two children; we have sold her daughter Nwashidjasa to lobola Debeza for Phusa. The oxen were ours. If Phusa dies, Debeza belongs to us and not to you." So Muhambi can inherit the widow of his cousin, the son of his paternal uncle, but not the widow of his cousin, the son of his paternal aunt.

A man can inherit also *one of his father's wives*, as we have seen (page 203), but only under certain circumstances. The *dlaya shilongo* is never performed in the case of inherited women.

A rule on which Viguet insisted, but which is disappearing, is this: women, when their husband had no younger brothers, must be inherited by *batukulu* and not by *bana*; *batukulu*, i. e. either true grandsons, sons of the son, or uterine nephews, sons of the sister of the deceased. The reasons for this law are: 1) *Bana*, sons, would take liberties with their father's wives and make *balama* of them, if they could inherit them regularly. This would spoil the life of the village. 2) If I, being *niwana*, a son, inherit my father's wife and have a child by her, this child is *niwana*, a son, to me. On the other hand, this inherited woman may have had children by my father, and they are my brothers. So, one of this woman's children is my son, the other my brother! "A beleki tinshaka timbiri." — "She has had children of two generations!" This must not be.

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These marriage regulations show us plainly how the family is constituted amongst the Thongas. A glimpse at the system of relationship of the primitive tribes will help us to understand something more of the strange features of this family law.

D. REMNANTS OF PREVIOUS SYSTEMS OF RELATIONSHIP.

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Modern ethnographers have tried to ascertain how the human family has evolved through the ages, and this is, roughly speaking, the theory adopted by some of them. The first stage was marked by universal promiscuity; there was no family. Then, in a second period, restriction began to be enforced as regards marriage. Definite groups formed; all the women of one group were the regular wives of all the men of another group. This system still prevails in some Australian tribes. It is called *group marriage*. In a third phase, the family constituted itself round the mother. She was the owner of the children, who traced their descent through her and her female ancestors. In this form, which is called the *uterine family*, or *matriarchy*, the mother's brothers bore a special relation to the children: the father being hardly known or without authority, these male relatives of the mother had to defend the offspring of their sisters. In the end, the uterine family passed into the *patriarchal or agnatic family*. The father became the head, and descent was traced through the males. The development of property seems to have favoured this last evolution. The husband, who owned the property, became the master of the family, and he therefore took his wife to himself and made a home. (Compare p. 122.)

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Whatever may be the truth of this theory, we must recognise the fact that the Thongas have now reached this fourth stage. The family is definitely agnatic. The father's right is paramount. However, there are in this family system some features which appear to be a relic of former periods.

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I. *Original promiscuity.*

582 As regards the idea that promiscuity prevailed originally—a supposition which is combated by some scientists (see W. H. R. Rivers, "On the origin of the classificatory system of relationship," Anthropological Essays), I see no trace of it amongst the Thongas. Amongst the Pedis, there is one day when free intercourse is allowed all through the clans; it is the closing day of the second circumcision school. But this custom can be explained on a totally different basis.

II. *Group marriage.*

178 As regards *group marriage*, we may see a remnant of the system
582 in the fact that a man has a special preferential right to certain
595 women of his wife's family, the *tinamu*. His son will also consider
837 it peculiarly appropriate to take a wife from his mother's clan, the one into which his father married.

The *tinamu* custom might be explained in that way. There is however a very marked difference between the group-marriage system and the Thonga family law. Amongst Australian aborigenes, whilst a man of a group has the right of marrying all the women of the other group, a woman of the other group has the same right to marry all the men of the first. Amongst the Thongas it is absolutely taboo for a married woman to have relations with anybody except her own husband. Polygamy exists and is approved of, but polyandry is strongly censured and considered a disgusting custom. The main reason for this is no doubt the *matlulana* superstition, which bears all the character of a very ancient idea in the Thonga system. The story of P. K. which I relate in Appendix IV, will show how deeply the sin of polyandry is felt (1).

(1) It is true that the Ba-Pedi who are neighbours of the Thongas, have a kind of polyandry (See page 99). But this has nothing to do with group marriage, and the wives of a rich man whom he allows to have intercourse with other men, choose their lovers as they like and not according to a law of preferential right binding two groups.

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835 Though laying much stress on this very important difference we must notice, nevertheless, that there is a certain correspondence between the rights of men and women in this respect. A man has a preferential right to his wife's younger sisters, and to the daughters of his wife's brothers, be these men younger or older than his wife. He is a potential husband for all these tinamu. It results from this fact, that, as regards a woman, she is also a potential wife, for all her husband's younger brothers, who can inherit her and are also called tinamu by her, and for the sons of her husband's sisters, be they older or younger than her husband.

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582 Another feature of these early Australian forms of society is that all the persons belonging to a given generation call each other brothers (or sisters), and call the preceding generation fathers and mothers and the following generation sons indiscriminately. We may compare with this classificatory system the Thonga custom of calling all the father's wives and all the mother's sisters mothers; and all the father's brothers fathers. But this is not necessarily a trace of group marriage. As we have seen before, the meaning of kinship terms is very often extended to other people as a sign of respect or of love; the Thongas, nevertheless, know perfectly well the difference existing between the technical use of these terms and their wider connotation. There is something natural in these appellations. When we call such and such a person Father Morton, Mother Fuller, Brother James or Sister Agnes, no one would take this to be a relic of the group marriage phase! On this point my conclusion would therefore be: certain customs may be considered as traces of this old system, but it is not absolutely necessary to explain them by this hypothesis. The preference accorded to a wife's sisters, or nieces, may very well owe its origin to the following cause: when a group has ascertained that its women are well treated in another group, it welcomes new alliances with that group, thinking that, in this dreadful lottery of marriage, the guarantee given by a previous happy union is not to be despised!

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584 day is fixed for a visit to the capital where it will be concluded.

Let us consider the procedure in the case of the marriage of Nwamantibyane, the youthful chief of Mpfumo, who has since been exiled. The following account of the discussion preparatory to the marriage is given on the authority of Tobane, a witness of the proceedings, and will aptly illustrate the etiquette observed on such occasions.

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584 The dignitaries are assembled, and one of them, the brother of the deceased chief, commences thus: "Well, you the chiefs of Mpfumo! In truth! If we are assembled here to-day, is it not that 651
622 we have truly seen that we must, in fact, increase the chief, and give him the wife of the country? This is all the business, you, the chiefs." One of those addressed replies: "In putting the matter before us, hast thou been unequal to the task? (No! understood.) And we, what further words could we add? Nothing remains to be said... You then tell us what we shall have to give you, dwellers in the capital!" Then the secondary chiefs say: "For our part, we will give each one pound sterling or an ox, as you may prefer." The headmen of the villages will each contribute ten shillings and each village one shilling besides. In former times, before the circulation of money in the country, each one gave a hoe.

The secondary chiefs go back to their own districts and get together the money or the oxen as the case may be. This done, the fact is duly notified to the capital and all the contributions are conveyed to the chief. An account is kept of all monies or cattle contributed. When Nwamantibyane was married the special subscription amounted to thirty pounds sterling and twenty oxen.

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582 The future queen was chosen from the royal family of Matjolo; her name was Mimalengane. The young chief had only seen her on one occasion, when she was returning from Gaza. Nevertheless she was his first cousin once removed; Hamule, father of Zihlala and grandfather of Nwamantibyane, married the sister of Malengane, chief of Matjolo, and his daughter was Mimalengane (the prefix *mi* signifies daughter of), who was now

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~~582~~ to become Nwamantibyane's wife. We have already mentioned the fact that marriages between relatives are sanctioned in the royal families. The chiefs of Mpfumo generally marry into the reigning families of Mabota and Matjolo, and these latter seek their wives at the court of Maputju.

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⁵⁸⁴ All the preliminaries being settled, the purchase money collected, the young girl chosen, Matshibi, the Mpfumo counsellor acting as Agent General for Matjolo, sent Nwamatshabane, the boy who was his messenger, to Sigaulé, chief of Matjolo, to make the actual proposals for the marriage. The messenger did not address himself directly to the chief, but made his approach through the Matjolo Counsellor in charge of Mpfumo's affairs, whose name was Mambene. The request was made thus: "We have come to ask our *kokwana*, (that is to say our relative on the mother's side, p. 231) in marriage." — "It is well," replied Sigaulé, when Mambene had transmitted to him the honourable proposal. — "Go home again, thou shalt come for our reply." A meeting of the members of the Matjolo royal family was then convened, matters discussed, the demand agreed to and the same envoy, attended by a companion, came, as arranged, to receive the reply. The hut was carefully swept and the enquirers renewed their message: "Our chief is still celibate... He sleeps in his bachelor's quarters" (This was not true, as he had already several wives, but they did not count!) "He is anxious to get married. Make haste to give him Mimalengane." — "It is well," said the others, "on one of these days we will go and discuss the affair at your place. When will you expect us?"

A day is fixed and the great ones of Matjolo go to see Nwamantibyane. A gorgeous reception has been prepared for them: an ox has been killed in their honour, but they are at first treated in a niggardly manner, and are given very short commons for breakfast; for, before anything else can be done, the tiresome money question must be settled.

In the large hut all these important personages take their places with some constraint... The suitor is not present. The real business of the purchase money is not immediately referred to; endless compliments, all sorts of circumlocutions are indulged

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582 The reason why it is not taboo for a chief to marry a near relative is this, according to Mankhelu: "Nothing is taboo for him because he is the earth (hosi i misaba, a yi yili ntshumu). He may even take a girl from the houses of his younger brothers because everything is allowable for him. He has no sin. He is the one who makes the laws. Even if they are bad, people must accept them..." This identification of the chief with the earth is most curious and we shall speak of it again when treating of the sacred character of the chief.

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595 The wife paid for by the money of the country, though on the one hand she is the official wife, is on the other hand inferior to the first wife married by the chief. He does not perform the rites of widowhood when she dies (See page 202).
A chief, when he travels, always takes his wives with him.

D. THE REIGN.

1. *The sacred character of the Chief.*

643 Let me say at once that, amongst the Ba-Ronga, the paraphernalia of royalty are reduced to a minimum. The chief is as scantily attired as are his subjects; possibly his belt of tails may be more plentifully garnished with these appendages. His huts are built on the same lines as the others; his village may be larger, but is sometimes smaller (1).

(1) One day when taking a walk on the hill of Rikatsi, I came to a field where, in the shade of a magnificent tree, I found three individuals — the three most powerful personages of the country — modestly squatting on their haunches and scaring the sparrows from their plantation of sorghum. The trio consisted of Muzila, the young chief, his brother and Makhani, his chief counsellor, who were devoting themselves to this tiresome occupation in the same way as the meanest of their subjects!

This same Muzila had several younger brothers, one of whom was engaged to look after our oxen, at a salary of ten shillings a month. One day the boy was ill. It happened to pour in torrents on that particular day, and whom should I see about ten o'clock in the morning, coming along absolutely drenched through and through, but the chief Muzila! "I am looking after your oxen to day" said he "in place of my brother... Here I am, and I have just come to let you know that I am going to water them!"

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11 On his death, his son Gwaba was put in his place. But he was deported by the Portuguese and his sister, Midambuze, filled the position. Consequently she was not lobola, but chose a husband for herself, a man of common origin (a titlhuba nuna). Her son may succeed her; in this case only can a uterine nephew of a chief take his place.

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847 At Gungunyana's court queens played a great part. This seems to be in accordance with the Zulu custom. After the death of Chaka's mother, sexual relations were taboo for the whole tribe during one year, and children conceived during that time were put to death by order of the chief! (See Colenso: Ten weeks in Natal.)

643 I know of no case in which a foreigner became chief of a clan through having married one of its princesses. He can become hosana, but the true hosana will be his wife and he himself will be but a prince consort. I have heard of two instances in which this happened.